

Dr. Burgess Weekly Address December 8, 2017

Protecting Second Amendment Rights

Hello, this is your Congressman Michael Burgess.

This week, the U.S. House of Representatives considered two bills that will strengthen Second Amendment rights. Like all constitutional protections, our Second Amendment rights should not end at the state line. On Wednesday, the House passed the Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act. This bill will allow individuals who are qualified to carry a concealed handgun in one state to carry in other states that also permit concealed carry.

I support the Second Amendment. I was glad to cosponsor this commonsense legislation. We must allow lawful, responsible gun owners to maintain their constitutional right to carry a firearm across state lines, as long as the individual follows the law of the receiving state.

This week, the House also voted to fix the National Instant Criminal Background Check System. Last month, a tragedy occurred in our state when a gunman carried out a mass shooting at a church in Sutherland Springs, Texas. Twenty-six innocent people died, including an unborn child. In this case, the perpetrator was prohibited by law from purchasing or possessing firearms or ammunition after being found guilty of domestic violence during a court-martial while serving in the U.S. Air Force. However, the Air Force failed to report the conviction to the NICS database, as required by federal law.

As we have learned, the NICS system is only as good as the information it contains. The bipartisan Fix NICS Act was introduced by a fellow Texas Congressman, Rep. John Culberson. It will ensure federal and state authorities comply with existing laws by penalizing leaders of federal agencies and departments that fail to report required criminal records to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). The bill also includes incentives for states to improve their reporting to the NICS database. Finally, it directs federal funding to make sure domestic violence records are accurately reported to the FBI.

The two bills considered this week will protect Americans' Second Amendment rights and work to combat unlawful gun violence. I take constitutional rights seriously, as do you. I appreciate your input on how Congress can best serve you and your family.

As always, I appreciate your comments and your concerns on this issue or any other issue. May God bless you and your family, and as the song says, God bless you Texas.